CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 - 26. (canceled)

27. (new) An apparatus for filling an array of blisters of a foil with respective small objects, the apparatus comprising:

means for moving the foil with the blisters open upward past a filling station;

an endless transfer belt formed with blisters arrayed substantially identically to the blisters of the foil;

a pair of horizontally spaced drive rollers over which the transfer belt is spanned, one of the rollers being at the filling station and the other of the rollers remote therefrom;

supply means for depositing objects in bulk onto an upper stretch of the belt adjacent the other roller and for sorting each of the objects into a respective one of the blisters of the upper stretch of the transfer belt;

means for rotating the rollers and advancing the upper stretch of the roller toward the filling station with the objects in the blisters of the belt; and

a placer having a multiplicity of pickers and operable to pick a multiplicity of respective objects out of the blisters of the transfer belt and deposit the picked objects simultaneously into the blisters of the foil.

28. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27 wherein the pickers are arrayed substantially identically to the blisters of the transfer belt and of the foil.

29. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27 wherein one of the rollers is a drive roller and is formed with a multiplicity of recesses arrayed substantially identically to the blisters of the transfer belt and receiving the blisters of the transfer belt as the transfer belt passes around the drive roller.

30. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27 wherein the transfer belt has a plurality of laterally spaced and transversely overlapping endless parts each formed with a plurality of the blisters and each spanned over both of the rollers, whereby the drive roller with the recesses synchronizes movement of the belt parts.

31. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 29, further comprising

a servomotor rotating the drive roller.

30. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27, further comprising

a collecting tray underneath the upper stretch of the belt.

31. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27 wherein the means for sorting includes a flow obstacle closely juxtaposed with an upper face of the upper stretch between the rollers so as to scrape off objects not in blisters.

32. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27, further comprising

a mobile rack carrying the transfer belt, drive rollers, supply means, rotating means, and placer.

33. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27 wherein the blisters of the transfer belt are shallower than the blisters of the foil.

34. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27, further comprising

a swivel plate juxtaposed with the upper reach.

35. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27, further comprising

a camera and

control means connected between the camera and the placer for monitoring filling of the blisters of the foil.

36. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27 wherein the upper reach is angled upward from the other roller toward the one roller such that objects on the upper reach but not in the blisters of the upper reach slide away from the filling station.

37. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27 wherein the transfer belt is formed of an elongated strip formed with blisters and the blisters at ends of the strip are nested into each other to make the transfer belt endless.

38. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 27 wherein the transfer belt extends transversely of the foil.

39. (new) A method of operating an apparatus to fill an array of blisters of a foil with respective small objects, the apparatus having:

an endless transfer belt formed with blisters arrayed substantially identically to the blisters of the foil;

a pair of horizontally spaced drive rollers over which the transfer belt is spanned, one of the rollers being at a filling station and the other of the rollers remote therefrom; and

a placer having a multiplicity of pickers,

the method comprising the steps of:

displacing the foil with the blisters open upward past the filling station;

rotating the rollers and thereby driving the belt to move an upper stretch of the belt from the other roller toward the filling station;

depositing the objects in bulk onto the upper stretch of the belt adjacent the other roller;

sorting each of the deposited objects into a respective one of the blisters of the upper stretch of the transfer belt;

picking a multiplicity of the objects out of the blisters of the transfer belt at the filling station and depositing the picked objects simultaneously into the blisters of the foil.

40. (new) The method defined in claim 39 wherein the upper stretch of the transfer belt is moved generally perpendicular to a direction of travel of the foil.

41. (new) The method defined in claim 39 wherein the upper stretch of the belt is moved upward at an acute angle to the horizontal from the other roller to the one roller.

42. (new) The method defined in claim 39 wherein the objects are sorted into the blisters of the upper stretch by scraping objects not in blisters off the upper stretch.

43. (new) The method defined in claim 39 further comprising the steps of

detecting a width of the transfer belt and

operating the placer to only pick objects in a field corresponding to the detected width.